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The BEARING *of* PSYCHOLOGY *Upon* RELIGION

HARRISON SACKET ELLIOTT

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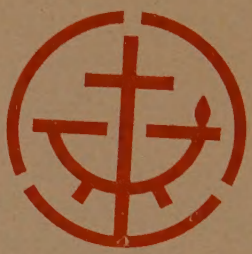

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The Bearing of Psychology Upon Religion

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THE BEARING OF PSYCHOLOGY UPON RELIGION

THE BEARING OF PSYCHOLOGY UPON RELIGION

CHAPTER I

THE FINDINGS OF PSYCHOLOGY REGARDING HUMAN NATURE

Many are claiming today that psychology is making religion unnecessary. Some go further and say that it makes religious faith impossible. The fact is that the development of psychology probably has more bearing upon religion than has any other scientific advance. The reason is evident. Psychology represents the effort to apply scientific processes to human personality and to individual and group conduct. These areas of life have always been considered the unique province of religion. Indeed, psychology seeks to study scientifically religious experience itself.

All religion is built on assumptions concerning man, his nature and possibilities, as well as on assumptions concerning the universe, its char-

acteristics and its powers. A sound religion must be based upon the most accurate information regarding the physical universe and human personality which it is possible to secure. Whatever new understanding of human personality and individual and group conduct psychological research may bring, therefore, will directly affect religion. Especially when the assumptions on which religion is based are proven by scientific investigation and experimentation to be inaccurate, must religion be adjusted to these new facts. Otherwise one is living in a fool's paradise, afraid to meet the facts of life. For instance, religious beliefs widely held were posited on the assumption of the total depravity of human nature—that man was born with bad tendencies and that only through the transformation of this original nature by the power of religion has he any hope of developing good character. On these assumptions, the whole plan of salvation was developed. Psychological science has proved, seemingly beyond any reasonable doubt, that this assumption regarding human nature is incorrect; that original nature, as a matter of fact, represents a great range of possibilities; that these capacities may be developed destructively or constructively; that

original nature is really neither good nor bad but has the potentialities of either or both.

A religious leader may ignore these findings; he may attempt to prove this psychology incorrect in order to maintain his religious belief; or he may rethink his religious faith in terms of a more adequate understanding of human nature. Which is the more reasonable course of action? It is true that he must not quickly and uncritically accept new findings of science but must wait for them to receive reasonably adequate verification; but will he not be wise to develop his religion on the basis of the best that science shows concerning human nature, rather than to attempt to prove that the assumptions on which his former theology was founded were true? It is the unavoidable and indeed the fascinating characteristic of the religion of any individual that he must interpret and reinterpret that religion as his knowledge of physical nature and human nature grows. It is evident, therefore, that whether psychology makes one's religion unnecessary or even impossible depends upon one's religion. Our interest is to discover what effect the wider knowledge of the results of psychology is having, or is likely to have, upon the religion of the average person of today.

The first place this problem faces the individual of religious faith is in relation to his confidence in regard to the possibilities of the transformation of human nature. One of the most fundamental claims of religion has been that it is able to change human nature. But anyone who has participated in efforts for the betterment of individual life or the improvement of the social order must have met repeatedly the pessimistic judgment, "You cannot change human nature." There are endless variations on the same theme: "Human nature being what it is, it is inevitable that we should have war; people are born fighters and they will always fight." "Human nature being what it is, it is useless to hope that cooperation will replace competition in business and in industry; people were born competitive, and without competition they will never work at all." "Human nature being what it is, we are bound to have racial antagonisms; people naturally dislike members of other races." Such judgments are not only common in popular discussions but sometimes they carry the endorsement of what appears to be competent authority. Is it not essential, then, that we turn from mere argument and speculation and inquire quite directly whether or not we have been

deceiving ourselves with regard to the potentiality of human beings?

Certainly, if psychological research should justify practical pessimism regarding human possibilities, there would be real confirmation of the widespread belief that Jesus of Nazareth was an impractical idealist. Such results would explain the failure of Christians to carry out in everyday life the ideas of their Master. Human nature being what it is, we would say, such ideals are quite beyond the range of human attainment. It may be pointed out in passing that all idealism must tumble to earth at the same time; not only Christians but all others engaged in social work or individual rehabilitation under such circumstances would be pursuing the same false hope.

The question is peculiarly serious for the religious man or woman, because beliefs about God involve beliefs about human beings and their possibilities. Certainly, if most of the human race has by the limitations of original nature no possibilities in this life, it is difficult to believe in a loving God or a friendly universe. We cannot slip out of the dilemma by offering a compensating hope in another world, because such hope itself would have to rest at last upon the same insub-

stantial basis. For some time we have been disposed to agree that, if there be a God in the universe, the revelations of physical science must be a part of the revelation of God. Similarly, scientific findings regarding human personality must surely be recognized as an essential part of such revelation. Religious faith must take into account the facts regarding the physical universe: similarly it must deal with what is discovered to be true with regard to human beings.

For the first time in history, human personality, individual behavior, and group conduct are being studied by scientific experimental methods. It is quite true that since psychology, as an experimental science, is only fifty years old, in its significant results only twenty-five, we must not expect too much of it. But the trends seem fairly clear and quite pertinent to the theme before us.

If our popular reporters are to be believed, the scientific study of human personality seems to offer very little support for the optimism of idealists. Intelligence tests have been interpreted widely in most depressing terms. Repeatedly it is asked, "What hope is there for democracy when the average intelligence is that of a child of fourteen years of age?" A fatalistic pessimism

breathes through the statement that of every 10,000 individuals a few will be feeble-minded, the vast majority only average, while not more than 3 or 4 per cent will be of superior ability. Terman, in the second volume of *Genetic Studies of Genius,* shows that of the eminent men of history all apparently showed in childhood marks which we today recognize as indicating superior intelligence. It would seem, indeed, that by our very native capacity we are selected for success or doomed to failure; that all men and women are born either leaders or followers.

The findings of the study of heredity seem to confirm this predetermination of individual destiny. Recently, a popular preacher, evidently having in mind the confident utterances of Wiggam's *The Fruit of the Family Tree,* showed how modern science had substituted for the theological doctrine of foreordination the undeniable biological doctrine—we are what in our germ cells was determined in the beginning. This is but an example of the kind of conviction popularly taught and widely held: that we may as well give up as far as most human beings are concerned, because, with the capacities which they received at birth, there is very little hope of their

attaining any real personality and independence, and we can treat them only as the low-intelligence animals they seem to be. The same attitude has been assumed toward entire races. One race is regarded as being by birth quite inferior to another race, and thus predestined to an inferior position. Preparatory schools and colleges apparently feel the same toward inherent capacity. They endeavor to make from the entire population a selection of those who they think are worthy of higher cultivation of the gifts that will inevitably make them the leaders of the country, foreordained to the purple. That the methods of selection sometimes exhibit quaint vagaries is of no significance here.

I

There is no question that people do differ markedly both in achievement and in character. Common-sense observation, apart from any scientific findings, tells us that such differences are wide and deep. Yet there faces us always in specific instances the question whether these differences are the result of inborn disparity in capacity, or, in greater or less measure, the result of different training. These wide popular deduc-

tions from scientific investigations run on a little too confidently. Is an undesirable characteristic in an individual always an inescapable part of his inheritance? Might it not be possible that in two individuals, one a success and the other a failure, the characteristics might have been interchanged under certain circumstances?

Modern psychology—in particular its experimental phase—would warn us that the personality which we know in its various characteristics and habits must not be identified with the original nature of the same individual. Ordinarily, we never encounter original human nature. In folks as we meet them, whether it be the babe of one day or the man of sixty, we have before us the results of their original capacities with the important addition of their experience to date. In no particular can we say with absolute confidence, "Here we have original nature and there we have the result of training." But we are reasonably certain that the effects of training are busy about the modification of nature in the earliest hours of life. In everyday affairs, frequently a man is described as being "naturally of a bad disposition," as if we were sure he was born with a grouch; but it is highly probable that this unfor-

tunate disposition is almost altogether the result of experience. So the preacher, to whom reference has been made, in his formulation of a doctrine of biological foreordination, indiscriminately brought under his summary term, "biological will," characteristics which had been developed in the practice of living, along with certain organic and physical assets or liabilities which were a part of the individual's birthright. We cannot determine a person's original nature solely by his present character, nor can we assume that certain elements were lacking in his original equipment simply because they have not appeared in his subsequent development.

The real question is, then: "What is the meaning of the results of all these investigations which have conveyed erroneous impressions to the ordinary mind?" There is no necessity here to deal in detail with the qualifications appropriate to any final estimate of the value of tests. Broadly speaking, it may be said that the meaning of the results is that original capacity is the only capital with which we have to work and that each one of us is actually limited by this inherited equipment. It is nearly certain that training does not increase native intelligence; it only develops a capacity that

is there. Training does not create a musical capacity; it only develops the possibility which was there. Some people have a larger and more active thyroid or adrenal gland discharge into the blood than do others, and the probability is that they are more excitable than their fellows. The best student in the room may be able to read four times as fast as the poorest. If they both practice hard they may each be able to read twice as fast as before but the best student in all probability would still far outdistance his schoolmate. Individuals do differ in their native equipment, and this equipment does determine the *type* and the *limit* of the possibilities of each. This conclusion does not involve, however, the pessimistic implications that are so easily unrolled by journalistic interpreters. The statement implies no more than its plain meaning. Each of us has a practically fixed repertory at birth and for good or ill that is what we have to work with. What we do with it is another matter.

II

A second important finding of psychology with reference to human personality carries our thought one step further. Original nature does not de-

termine personality: personality is not a fixed endowment.

Apparently our original nature is not that which the earlier psychologists used to suppose—a group of instincts which develop as a plant develops from seed. Individuals are not bound to exercise their entire repertory and show combativeness, self-assertion, mastery, competition, display, and all the rest. These develop with the individual. They do not run their course independently. They are, as it were, the raw material out of which personality is shaped and they may be variously combined into an infinite variety of structure.

Whatever name is used—S-R bonds, configurations, complexes, behavior patterns, or anything else—psychologists agree quite generally that our attitudes, habits, and skills—that is, the traits of personality that make an individual liked or disliked, reliable or unreliable, a person of independent initiative or a servile follower of others—are developed in the course of experience by that experience. In every individual there are many more possibilities than ever have been developed; and there are many characteristics now present which he would not have had if he had been born

into a different kind of home, lived in a different community, associated with different people, attended a different school, or met markedly different general conditions. It must be remembered that even members of the same family do not live in exactly the same environment except in the rarest instances.

These various characteristics seem present in possibility from birth. Of course, in the actual process of growing older the individual's native equipment undergoes definite change. The sex impulses furnish a clear example. In the case of most of these possibilities, however, how they develop—in fact, whether they develop at all—depends upon the practice gained in the experience of the individual. The character of the native equipment remains an important factor. A man with low vitality might quit where a more energetic man would fight. But, nevertheless, one who is overcome by the environment had in him the possibilities of independence, and the belligerent one had in him the possibilities of cooperation.

We will never really understand this until we think of a little baby starting out on the journey of life. He becomes hungry and wants to be fed; he is uncomfortable and wants to be taken care of;

he has to adjust himself to this cold world into which he has come. As a matter of fact, he has a harder time adjusting himself to the home into which he was born and getting along with his parents and brothers and sisters than we had when we went to college and were compelled to learn how to live in these new relationships; and he often is as homesick as some of us were. He tries out from his repertory those things which are more readily available, sometimes called instinctive. He finds in experience the ones which work; that is, the ones which get what is wanted or get him out of what is disliked. The ones which succeed persist; those which do not bring success are given up. If he finds that raising a row gets what he wants and if this process continues throughout the years, his guardians will have developed an individual who raises a row. If some other sort of conduct works, then that is what becomes developed. Human behavior is thus recognized as purposive, sometimes unconsciously so, in that it is developed in the experience of the individual in finding his way around in his environment and has served some use in the individual's adaptation.

Is it not probable that racial and national char-

acteristics have developed in the same way? People sometimes blame members of the Jewish race for characteristics they do not like. In so far as these exist, is not the treatment the Jews have received from Gentiles, from Christians indeed, during these last centuries, responsible; and have not these characteristics developed in the hard and successful fight which the Jews have had to make for a livelihood and, indeed, for life itself? The Chinese have had the reputation of being a peaceful people. They are now developing warlike qualities. Is this because their original natures have changed? Not at all. But out of their experience with Christian nations of the West, they are developing warlike qualities in response to Western domination and as a protection against it. The mad rush for materialistic success is so dominant a characteristic of the American that he is thought of in the rest of the world as the dollar chaser. Is there not a direct relation between the situation Americans have faced in a new country with unlimited resources and the development of this national characteristic? Examples might be multiplied. Racial and national characteristics have their bases in original nature; but those which are developed depend on the con-

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ditions the race or nation meets and the qualities which in experience seem to prove necessary to meet the situation.

Indeed, the findings of psychology recognize how far the failures of human beings are due to the conditions which society has imposed. Scientific research tends to confirm the commonly accepted belief as to the significance of early childhood. What the psychologist calls "the conditioned reflex" or what we might term "emotional conditioning" means that early experiences often develop attitudes and habits, fears and inhibitions, which operate disastrously in later life. An increasing number of difficulties which formerly were assigned to original nature are recognized as due to the sort of training and experience children have had. We have long recognized that to be born in a servant class in certain countries stamped one with the speech, attitudes, and manners of a servant, just as the person born into the home of social standing develops easily the language, the manners, and the grace of this class. But we are now recognizing how far this goes. Children of different races get along together without race feeling until they learn race prejudice from their elders. Many of the sex difficulties

of adolescents, and the wrecked homes of adults, are due to early unfortunate sex training. Since people are born into a social system which assumes that a few are to be leaders and the others are to follow, the God-given possibilities of the rank and file have little chance of development. Our entire education leads to a premium on conformity and trains us to accept the dictates of the more able. And then, trained in home, school, and church, to be subservient accepters of others' ideas, individuals are criticized because they are unwilling and unable to think for themselves and the more aggressive spirits who break through their bondage are reproved because of the crudity of their efforts. Individuals raised in sordid surroundings, without the stimuli of beauty in music and art, are criticized for their lack of appreciation. The characteristics which make one a useful and desirable member of society are present in greater or lesser degree in possibility in the rank and file of people, but it is possible to develop characteristics just the opposite. A free, growing, healthy personality is an achievement dependent upon a proper kind of social experience; and whether the child, or the adult who is still in bondage, will have this rightful freedom

and development rests with those in posts of responsibility in home, school, industry, politics, and other aspects of social life.

It should not be assumed that in this development of personality religion has no part. Perhaps the most potent factor in the experience in which a person grows up is the religion of those with whom he comes in contact. It is not what his parents and those in the community say they believe, but what their attitudes and conduct show they believe which makes the difference. The sort of God in whom they really believe or disbelieve, their conviction as to the way religion is a resource in life, their attitude toward human life and destiny, their beliefs on human worth and possibility are definite and formative factors, because they are influential in determining the atmosphere in which one lives. The second finding of psychology is, then, that the kind of personality the individual has depends upon the kind of experience he has had.

Perhaps it is evident now why it is not possible to divorce the individual and the social gospel. Individuals express themselves in groups and have their characteristics shaped in a social medium. If homes, schools, and churches, if business firms,

municipalities, and nations in their conduct are un-Christian, the children who grow up under these influences will develop un-Christian characteristics in order to get along with their elders and in order to make a success of life. If we use non-Christian methods we shall grow non-Christians, no matter how worthy our aims. We cannot bring peace by war. If an individual protests alone, he does an heroic, but usually an ineffective, thing. But if a group, however small, commences to work definitely to create a little bit of the Christian social order in a home, in a college, in a factory, group conduct will change and individual characteristics will be modified. Such examples will be contagious. If we would start practicing in groups, small and large, the ideals of Jesus, some day we would be able to *grow* a generation which would not know war, a generation the members of which had developed the Christian characteristics because they had grown in an environment in which these qualities were fundamental in the life of the group.

III

Psychologists, in the third place, are not willing to consider human personalities hopeless even

when undesirable characteristics have already developed. They believe in the modifiability of human beings. The old fatalistic attitude was to say that the individual is what he is and you have to make the best of it. In the past, an industrial firm felt no responsibility for training the inefficient individuals; but held them to come up to whatever standard was set, or get out. Criminal procedure held itself in no way responsible for helping individuals who had committed crimes to modify their behavior and become good citizens, but punished them because they had not been able to live up to that which society demanded. The practice of present-day psychologists, working in juvenile courts, reveals an opposite belief. If an individual has developed lying, stealing, or other anti-social habits, the psychologist in connection with the juvenile court assumes that there are reasons for this conduct, certainly in part beyond the control of the individual; and society as represented in this individual's home, school, or community, is held to account. What the individual needs is not punishment of the ordinary sort which still further sets his undesirable behavior. A large percentage of those who go to correction schools in New York State appear

later in Sing Sing. Crime is considered a symptom, and efforts are made to discover the causes and to adjust the contributing factors that the symptom may disappear and the individual become a useful member of society. How like the attitude of Jesus! His severe condemnation was for those who were the occasions of the stumbling, but he sought in every way to help the one who had gone astray.

This belief in the modifiability of human beings is still further evidenced in the work of the bureaus of children's guidance and of certain school psychologists. Such undesirable conduct as tantrums, temper, lying, laziness, and the round of difficulties which parents and teachers meet is recognized as having developed because of the unhealthy experience of the individual and as possible of remedy under proper treatment. For a parent or teacher to call upon a specialist for advice in regard to tantrums and temper, severe crying, fear, defiance of authority, and other problems, and to have the doctor give advice and help in the same direct professional fashion that the child-doctor gives help on diet and health problems still seems unusual. This is what is happening increasingly. A child who is defiant at home,

at school, everywhere, is brought to a specialist. He refuses to cooperate in any way. This child glories in the trouble he causes by his anti-social attitude. A year or two later he is cured; that is, he has not had his spirit broken and been made to knuckle down to authority, but he has become a cordial and cooperative member of society, using his energies positively instead of negatively. The causes for the child's attitude are usually found in the home conditions, the attitudes of parents, the school environment; and these causal factors must be adjusted just as in health problems it is necessary to give attention to food, sanitary conditions, and other contributing causes of physical ill health.

Specialists who are both physicians and trained psychologists are now available for consultation in regard to securing a sane and normal personality as well as a healthy body. Increasingly, it is recognized how much a person's mind and emotions have to do with his personality and, indeed, with his physical health. Parents and teachers who are very careful about physical overstrain of children will sometimes, without hesitation, do that which is far more disastrous—play upon fears and jealousies and other stronger

emotions to their own ends. It is now recognized that, with proper care, a reasonably healthy personality can be developed in the vast majority of individuals.

For adults, also, problems of adjustment to one's job, troubles in getting along with others, marital difficulties, problems of temper, nervous breakdowns, and other types of conduct problem are now being treated in this scientific manner. It is a new day when a home problem which is about to cause divorce need not be taken to the law court but may be brought to a trained specialist who gives help in locating the sources of the difficulty and in making the adjustments necessary for a happy home. The change has come also in industry because more attention is being given to vocational guidance and continuation education for the elimination of maladjustments in work and for overcoming handicaps and developing the capacities of individuals.

Already, in these more scientific attempts for the modification of human conduct and character, the reverent psychologist and the openminded minister are working together; and the religious worker is coming to see that everything he learns about human nature, and the conditions under

which character is formed and transformed, makes him by that much a more intelligent co-worker with God.

The third finding of psychology, then, is that undesirable characteristics can be changed for desirable ones, but only if the conditions are right.

IV

The fourth point is this: Individuals have possibilities of growth and development far beyond their present attainment. The possibilities seem unlimited. At least, no individuals, with the possible exception of imbeciles, have been found who have reached the limit of their growth. No racial group has reached its limit. An evidence is the tremendous progress of the Negro race during the past fifty years, when given a chance for development.

Formerly, those working in education gave up as hopeless the individuals of lower intelligence and waited patiently for the time when chronological age would permit them to be dropped out of school. But encouraging results have been secured with morons and backward children. In a school where the lowest per cent of the students,

in terms of intelligence score, were given special attention and guidance in getting adjusted to their work, rather than leaving them to survive or perish with the more able, failures were considerably reduced. Retardation classes for those who cannot work rapidly are being provided, and types of education suited to various types of individual capacity arranged.

Children have previously been exposed to a sort of "survival of the fittest" educational experience in which only those who had the greatest possibilities could survive. It is already recognized in health that people need not be allowed to die because they are not as rugged as others, but that most individuals can develop reasonably strong and healthy bodies if given proper attention. Educators are coming to recognize that if education is adapted more largely to varying capacities and related more vitally to the life situations, possibilities may be developed which have not been recognized before. The great increase in experimental schools, and in research and experimental departments of education, are indications of this search to adapt the content and method of education more nearly to the needs and capacities.

Formerly, an adult was considered to have

finished his period of education. But it is now recognized that these possibilities of growth continue up until senility, when the actual tissues of the body commence to break down; and this does not come about in some people until eighty-five or ninety years of age. The rapidly growing movement for adult education is the practical recognition of this psychological fact. Not all will follow the example of the woman of seventy who is reported in the newspapers as having enrolled as an undergraduate in one of the middle western universities, but an increasing number of people will expect to continue their education until they die.

V

Especially important is a fifth group of potentialities. Human beings have within themselves the capacities for their own improvement. They possess, both individually and in social groups, the capacity to recognize fundamental needs or wants and to set them up definitely as goals to be worked for and attained in the future; and they are capable of learning out of their experience to criticize and improve both the goals they wish to attain and what they have done to reach them.

This is the reason a human being can plan ahead for a vocation, or a home, or certain types of business success. This is the reason such great ends as better race relations and international good will can become the goals of endeavor. The fact that a human being can in the present draw upon the past, as he looks into the future, makes individual and social progress possible.

Further, human beings seem to be so made that all of their developed abilities rally toward the attainment of an end in which they really believe, and new and creative possibilities are released as well. Whether it be Kohler's monkeys seeking to find ways of getting fruit, or an Edison searching for a filament that will make an incandescent light; whether the individual is seeking to earn a fortune, to find the cure of cancer, or to discover means of eliminating racial strife, there is restlessness and earnest continuation of activity until the goal is reached. Resourcefulness, of which the individual was not aware, is brought in to drive. It is evident, therefore, why educators are putting so much stress on purpose.

This capacity operates also in ideals and standards. Everything we have rallies to help us carry out an ideal in which we really believe. There is

strong emotional protest when we fail. To attain an ideal brings the deepest satisfaction. This operates in uncritical fashion in the approval the individual feels when he does that in accordance with his early training, and in the emotional protest he has when he does something wrong according to his early standards. Many will recall their own struggles regarding amusements, Sunday observance, and other practices. But our nature seems to be just as insistent in regard to standards and purposes which we have not inherited socially and uncritically but which we have made our own by an adequate thinking-feeling process. This is what might be called an enlightened conscience, rather than the uncritical conscience which follows simply the standards of the family or group to which the owner of the conscience belongs.

Perhaps this discussion will give added appreciation of Jesus' emphasis on what an individual purposes in his heart. Certainly, once Christians come to believe in the ideals of Jesus and in reality desire to make them the goal of practical endeavor, human nature has both the capacities for making these the dynamic ends of effort and the resourcefulness to attain these goals.

Five things, then, psychology has to say regarding the potentialities of human life:

First, the limit and range of what may be developed in any individual is inborn in him. Individuals differ in this native equipment.

Second, original nature does not predetermine personality. Original equipment is much more versatile and has a greater range of capacity than has ordinarily been assumed. That which is developed depends upon experience, and the same original nature with a different type of environment will develop entirely different characteristics.

Third, human characteristics are modifiable. Persons of undesirable characteristics can change to people of better characteristics, and individuals with certain inefficiencies may develop greater efficiencies, provided the conditions are met.

Fourth, the capacity for growth is seemingly unlimited. The effort of education is to bring out latent possibilities in people and make continued growth possible.

Fifth, human beings have within themselves the capacities which make for their own improvement and development and the basis for the dynamic which leads them on to the realization of their purposes.

It will be seen, therefore, that the psychologist really shares the confidence of Jesus regarding ordinary folk. He has no blind belief that everything will turn out all right no matter what happens. But just as Jesus, though recognizing differences, had confidence in the unrealized possibilities of the blind beggar as well as of the rich young ruler, so the psychologist sees in all individuals and groupings potentialities far beyond those which have been attained, and possibilities worth developing. Indeed, the psychologist who is seeking to make available resources for the transformation of human life has a right to feel himself as belonging to the direct fellowship of Jesus.

2/27/28.

THE EFFECT OF SCIENCE UPON RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS

CHAPTER II

THE EFFECT OF SCIENCE UPON RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS

Psychology has a direct bearing upon personal religious experience. The focus of this problem is in relation to the kind of God in whom one can believe and the place of prayer in life. Men and women are troubled, either lest God should prove to be not objectively real or lest He should be beyond the reach of experience as a source of power in life. In the past, humanity rested secure in the idea of a God, infinite and transcendent, apart from the known universe, and yet imaged in some definite form. This God, religious people have believed, could be appealed to directly and would answer the prayer of the person of faith.

Scientific developments have made it difficult to think of God in such a way. As the telescope has penetrated into the limitless reaches of the universe, as the microscope has given a glimpse of the infinite minuteness of matter, as geology

has pushed back the beginnings of the known universe æons beyond human comprehension, the thought of a transcendent God, apart from the universe and acting independently of the processes of physical and human nature, has become extremely difficult. A conception of God immanent in the universe and working through orderly processes seems necessary. But this notion of the immanence of God tends to diffuse His person in a vague pantheism and make prayer to Him seem unavailing. Such a conception seems to make of God nothing more than the sum total of human experience, to make Him no more than, and no different from, physical nature or the social will. In short, the belief about God and prayer, which one can hold in a scientific world, seems to many people like no religion at all.

Much of religion today, it is true, still embodies the assumptions of a pre-scientific world. If one listens to the prayers, the hymns, and the sermon any week, in an average church, on what sort of assumptions will he find the service based? He will find these individuals talking to some unseen person, concerning whose power directly to answer their petitions and to interfere in the natural course of events they seem to have con-

fidence. They would be thanking this personality for favors which they had received; they would be asking for direction and guidance as to what they should do on this or that; they would be seeking protection from danger and difficulty; they would be requesting help for the problems of life and reinforcement for its responsibilities. Even today, in the majority of services of public worship, there is seemingly an assumption of a God who acts directly, independently, of the orderly processes of law, and who can be appealed to for interference in the course of natural events on the request of those who are really religious.

The assumption still persists that God can be appealed to, and He will respond directly like a fond father. Many people pray for money they need, for success in a business deal, for the elimination of a bad temper, and expect God to intervene in answering these prayers. There are still to be found in America people who seem to see nothing incongruous in praying for rain. It is more common to find individuals praying for the immediate and miraculous cure of disease or for some direct word of guidance spoken by God. Indeed, widespread movements, like Unity, with thousands of followers, count upon the prayers of

the faithful to bring the immediate and direct cure of sick individuals, independently of medical aid. A religious magazine recorded a gift of fifty dollars because the prayers offered had prevented a storm from destroying an individual's barn and automobile while it had worked havoc with his neighbor's property. Still more common is direct prayer for the immediate and miraculous transformation of human character. Conversion among evangelistic groups has usually been assumed to be a sudden and miraculous change, effected by the direct intervention of divine power.

In the physical realm many individuals have now made the adjustment and are willing to recognize a scientific universe in which the resources are not available for the mere request, but only as human beings genuinely ask by doing their part. But in the realm of human personality many religious people still assume a pre-scientific God who can be appealed to directly for the miraculous transformation of human character. Despite the adjustments which have been made to science by religion, it is true that in creed and ritual, in the practices of prayer and worship, the usual religion of the day is still very largely based on the pre-scientific assumptions of a natural and a super-

natural world. The individual does all he can by means of the natural forces with which he is acquainted. Having gone to the limit of his possibilities, he expects it may be possible to break through the natural world into a world beyond nature on which he may call, to make up for his deficiencies and to bring power beyond his understanding. Religion, for such persons, represents the method by which the resources of this supernatural realm are brought to bear upon the natural and made available to human beings.

Psychology is the recognition that within the realm of human personality we must change from a pre-scientific to a scientific attitude. We cannot assume here that God will intervene directly or that He will perform a miracle to make up for our neglected effort. Parents of the best intentions spoil their children. While we used to think that when a man accepted religion his whole character was instantaneously transformed, we now recognize that the acquisition of the ideals of one's religion is an attainment secured by earnest and persistent practice. There are some who have attained them in their more personal relations with their families and their friends, who have not yet even tried to reach them in business,

in politics, and in racial affairs. They are true to their religious ideals only in those areas in which they have persistently sought to carry them out. There are infinite possibilities of transformation and development within human personalities; but the true follower of religion will not expect these changes to take place by the easy method of the direct intervention of God in answer to a request, but only as he truly prays and becomes a real coworker with God in searching to discover the conditions for such transformation, and in working earnestly to bring about the results.

Many will feel that the discussion thus far has shown that religion is unnecessary. If religion is no longer available as a miraculous and divine plus in life, on which individuals may call in time of need and expect direct answer; if there are no two realms, natural and supernatural, but all is both natural and supernatural, then religion has lost its unique place, and is for the intelligent individual unnecessary. They will feel that it will be used only by those who still believe that there is magic on which they can call. But the difference is not that the unscientific people have religion and the scientific no religion. It is not a case of

one group believing that there is guidance available, help in time of need, power beyond their comprehension, and the other group feeling that all life must be lived without guidance or resources on the dead level of what uninspired human nature seems able to accomplish. The difference is rather in their belief as to where these resources reside and their understanding of the conditions under which they may be made available.

Primitive man saw the manifestations of electricity, as the lightning struck down the mighty tree, set fire to a village, or killed a man in his tracks. He called it supernatural and sought to propitiate the anger of the gods who were thus manifesting their wrath. Modern man has come to understand electricity better, in that he knows the conditions under which it can be used, even though he can account for it no better than could primitive man. He harnesses it to move the machinery of a great factory or to light a city, to broadcast the human voice to a whole nation or to talk round the world. He sees a thousand times more wonderful manifestations of this mysterious force, which he does not understand and does not create. But because he knows how to use it he

calls it natural. As long as it is mysterious, cannot be controlled, manifests itself unexpectedly, it has been called supernatural. As soon as the conditions under which it can be used are understood, it has been called natural. Forces of which we are ignorant have been called supernatural and miraculous; those we know how to use and control have been called natural. But the modern manifestations of nature made known by science are manyfold more the evidence of the supernatural universe in which we live than the erratic manifestations of nature in a pre-scientific world.

A minister told of help he was able to bring to a person who came to him for counsel. Because he knew something of emotional psychology and the methods of the psychiatrist, he said that he did what the people of Biblical times would have called casting out demons miraculously, simply because he was able to utilize knowledge concerning human personality which modern science is making available. May it not be true, indeed, that the people in the past who said they secured the results for the mere asking, unconsciously, but nevertheless actually, did meet the conditions under which these resident possibilities for the transformation of human nature were released?

Has it not been true during the ages, that the great teachers, preachers, and parents have understood, because of their uncommon insight, some of the laws of human personality? However that may be, what were called miracles in a pre-psychological age are now being accomplished before our eyes in the transformation of conduct and character.

The man who accepts the scientific viewpoint does not assume that life is without possibilities and must be lived on a dead level; but he does recognize that these potentialities are inherently a part of nature and of human nature. As he comes in contact with the physical universe and with human folk, he recognizes resident within them possibilities and powers yet untapped and beyond his understanding, possibilities and powers so wonderful that supernatural seems the only adequate term by which to describe them. Yet they are natural, for they are a part of nature and of human nature, and available not magically, but only as through earnest search the conditions for their release are discovered and met.

No scientist claims to create the resources for human life and endeavor. He discovers them and finds the conditions necessary for their release.

As the reverent scientist discovers in the physical universe around him possibilities beyond his understanding, he bows in the presence of these heretofore unrealized forces of nature, recognizing that he is in the presence of God Himself. As he discovers methods for the cure of human ills, he recognizes that he is but the instrument for the use of resources resident in the universe and in the human organism. And as he thus learns more of these infinite resources, he becomes a more intelligent coworker with God and secures new revelations of the Divine. So the psychologist, as he comes to realize the unlimited possibilities of human folk and the infinite resources resident within them, feels that he is learning more of God as he comes to know the divine laws in human personality and that he is helping to reveal to individuals divine power. Nor is this asking individuals to lift themselves by their own boot-straps or suggesting to them a human God. What can give one more confidence in the immanence of God than to find these infinite resources resident within the universe? And what can give one more confidence in a God of love, immanent in human life, than to discover these infinite potentialities resident in human

beings? God is then not the wonder worker but the real and immanent source of our life, with whom we have growing fellowship as we come to know more fully the evidence of Himself in the universe around us and in human personalities.

It must be evident that part of the difficulty in the consideration of the relation between such a science as psychology, and religion is the failure clearly to see, on the one hand, the distinction between the functions of science and those of religion; and on the other hand, to see the fundamental and inevitable interrelation of religion and science. They are in two different realms, but they are always found together. For instance, religion does not determine what are the facts regarding the physical universe or regarding human personality and conduct. That is the function of scientific investigation. But religion is profoundly concerned with what science finds to be the facts, for it must take these results into account. The findings of scientific investigation form the raw material in relation to which an individual works out his interpretation of life, determines his attitudes toward the world and the universe, finds the purposes which become commanding, seeks to conserve the values

he considers worth while, and lays hold on the resources which science has revealed. This is his religion and it is built upon his science.

On the other hand, a scientist, purely as a scientist, is unconcerned with religion in his investigations. All he seeks to do is to discover what the facts are about the phenomena of nature and human nature and the conditions under which certain results may be secured or avoided. But the scientist is never solely a scientist. He is a human being. And in spite of himself whatever is his religion influences him. For instance, he chooses to work upon the elimination of a deadly disease rather than to discover the means of improving a luxury production because he is interested in human welfare, or he chooses the opposite because he is offered a large sum of money. In the very decisions he makes, the purposes which control him and the values he considers worth while are influencing him and indeed are being shaped; and these are part of his religion.

As soon as a scientist discovers something to be a fact, he at once starts to make an interpretation of life or an attitude toward the universe upon it. So certain scientists have joined with their scientific findings a mechanistic interpretation of life. But

in so doing they are no longer scientists but are philosophers or theologians. The confusion has come not because they became philosophers or theologians but because they insisted their philosophy or theology was proven true by their science. This is a dogmatic attitude on the part of many scientists that the leaders in religion have the right to oppose. Scientific findings do not make any particular interpretation or course of action inevitable. On the same scientific facts entirely different philosophies or theologies are built. For instance, when the intelligence tests seemingly revealed an average mental age equal to that of a child of fourteen years, some psychologists immediately said: Therefore democracy is impossible; autocratic government is inevitable. They sought to prove a certain philosophy of government was made necessary by their scientific findings. But others who accepted the same results of the intelligence tests replied that democracy is so important to the welfare of people that since they seem to have a mental age of fourteen, we must work out democratic processes suited to fourteen year olds.

John B. Watson, the behaviorist psychologist, finds certain facts about human nature, particu-

larly in his experiments with babies. If he insists, as many claim, that human nature is completely mechanistic, he is no longer Watson the psychologist, but has become Watson the theologian. Others take Watson's scientific findings, but make an entirely different interpretation of human nature upon the basis of them. Behaviorism as a psychology is making a real contribution to psychological science. I happen not to believe in the theology called behaviorism which has been built upon the basis of Watson's findings. I am sorry for the confusion that has come from the assumption that this science and this theology are one; and the confusion is increased because behaviorism is such a dogmatic theology. The scientist must not attempt to force his theology upon the world by means of his science.

But it must be said with equal directness to the religious leader that he must take account of science in building his religious faith. While science cannot dictate to religion, religion cannot ignore science. Instead of trying to prove any psychology untrue and attacking the psychologist personally, as many ministers are doing, they should take the scientific findings and use them as they rebuild their religious faith. In every scien-

tific advance, we have had the three attitudes taken. Certain scientists have said: "There, you see, the universe is mechanistic and religion has no place." Certain theologians have said: "Well, if that science upsets my religious faith, I'll prove the science wrong." Others have taken the only constructive attitude, whether scientists or theologians. They have said: "These new findings are interesting. They may be a part of the revelation of the sort of a universe in which we live. I'll rethink my religion in the light of these new revelations of the physical universe and of human nature."

But psychological advance not only has made necessary the continuous rethinking of religion, but it is forming the basis for a more useful and dynamic religion. Part of our difficulty in religion is our attempt to find it apart from instead of in and through the processes of life. If our religion is true to what we find in the universe around us, it will form a real place in our life. Psychology makes it necessary for religious leaders to recognize that in the realm of human personality and individual and group conduct, and indeed in the development of religious experience itself, they must take the scientific rather

than the pre-scientific attitude. Results are attained not by the intervention of some miraculous power but by meeting the conditions for the release of inherent and limitless potentialities.

Religion, then, must not break psychological law, but use it. Religion must be profoundly concerned with the ends, with the purposes, for which this new knowledge of human nature is used. Religion must be concerned that it shall be employed to secure the freedom of persons and to make them sons of God in their own right rather than to place individuals in bondage to things as they are and slaves to those in authority. It must be concerned that this new knowledge shall be used for the great causes that have to do with human welfare rather than for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many. Religion must be profoundly concerned with helping the rank and file of people learn how to live creatively so that the resources within and around them may be utilized. Religion must recognize that knowledge of these inherent resources is not sufficient, but that they will be called forth only as great concerns capture individuals and great purposes dominate them. Over and over again, in relation to life's responsibilities about which they

really care, very ordinary folk do the impossible, something that nobody knew they could do, and groups in their fellowship become creative and dynamic in a surprising manner. Religion must be concerned that these results are multiplied in human life. In such achievements, science will be the handmaid of religion. Psychology, then, instead of making religion unnecessary or impossible, is the fundamental basis for religion.

2/27/28

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOLOGY TO THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

CHAPTER III

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOLOGY TO THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

The discussion thus far may seem to many to leave those who are willing to take the scientific attitude in an impossible dilemma. A God completely transcendent and apart from the universe, thought of in idealized and perfect human form, is difficult to accept in the light of present-day science; but a God immanent, everywhere present, manifesting himself through physical and human nature, seems to them unsatisfying and, indeed, not like God at all. In any case they feel they are robbed of that which religion supposedly has offered—a God who can be experienced and in relation to whom they can face life with greater confidence and possibility of achievement. Perhaps if we understand human personality better, we may find that this Universe Personality who is becoming known through our larger acquaintance with the universe, is a more satisfying God than the God of childhood.

In order to make God unique and distinctive, we have, in the past, considered Him transcendent, apart from, and superior to the universe, though residing in it, and manifesting Himself through it. So as we have, in the past, sought to find the supernatural apart from and beyond the natural, we have searched for the supernatural possibilities and resources of the universe out of relation to the laws and potentialities we found resident in the universe. We have already suggested that this separation, this dualism, is at variance both with our experience and with the findings of science.

We may understand this separation if we remember that this same attitude has been taken toward the spiritual possibilities of a human being. To make the real self unique and distinctive we have, in the past, thought of it apart from and superior to the body, even though residing in and manifesting itself through the human organism. This attitude is shown in the persistent attempt to separate the physical and the spiritual in personality. These are not conceived as aspects of one unified whole, but as something discrete and disassociated. But personality cannot be so divided. From one point of view, any individual can be described as made up of so many bones,

and muscles, and habits. But there are certain qualities peculiarly his own, which come to characterize the individual. These are, for those who know him, his real distinctive self. We cannot find these characteristics apart from his talk, his walk, his facial expression, his many more or less complex ways of acting; and yet these qualities seem to be so pervasive and persistent that they come to be spoken of independently of the particular acts and attitudes which reveal them. In one sense, then, these characteristics are completely physical, for they express themselves only through the body. In another sense, they are completely spiritual, for they permeate and characterize everything he does. They are more than a catalogue of the sum total of the individual's habits and conduct patterns. The loveliness and attractiveness of a personality do not exist apart from the body, the physical manifestation, the words, the acts; and yet they are something distinctive which permeate and characterize these.

We say certain behavior is on the physical plane, and other conduct is on the spiritual plane. As a matter of fact, both kinds of conduct are physical, for they manifest themselves through the body; and both are spiritual, for they

have qualities which distinguish them. Spirituality, then, is the quality of the physical act—it is what gives meaning to a single word, to a turn of the head, to a touch upon the shoulder, or to the evanescent bouquet of roses offered in delicate homage. It is the fusing of the physical and the spiritual which makes an individual a personality. So we must think of personality in psychophysical terms and remember that physical and spiritual represent simply aspects of a personality and that they exist together.

It is not in the realm of human personality only that this separation between physical and spiritual cannot be maintained. The beauty of the sunset is not just the collection and arrangement of colors, and yet it is not apart from this physical manifestation. The wonder of the music of a Kreisler does not exist apart from the violin, and yet it is something more than some sound that the violin makes. In one sense, the rocks, the water, and this table are nothing but matter, dead; but we know that they are pulsating with energy and with life, and if we could but see, we would recognize what is going on. They have distinctive qualities; they are spiritual.

Our difficulty in understanding God is of the

same sort as our difficulty in understanding human personality. As we have sought to find the real self apart from the physical body, so we try to find God apart from the universe. God does not exist apart from the universe. In this sense, our conception is pantheistic. God is immanent and everywhere. But we have found certain qualities and resources in the universe which are distinctive so that, in another sense, God is distinct and transcendent. He represents the characteristics which breathe through nature and human nature. He is as distinctive in the universe as any personality is distinctive in the body.

But there is still more to be said of personality. Human personality may seem to be mechanistic, just a collection of behavior patterns which are set off automatically if the appropriate stimuli are present. But this is a very superficial description of personality, for, as one comes to know any individual, he finds that his habits and attitudes are organized around purposes, desires, and ideals, and these give his personality entity, unity, and dynamic. A really developed personality has purposes which dominate him. He can be counted upon to give himself unreservedly for others; to show race prejudice; to be loyal to his family. As

these purposes become integrated into more inclusive wholes which make up the central drive and dynamic of his life, he is still more of a person. These purposes, desires, ideals, ends of action, come to consciousness so that the individual knowingly uses them in the direction of his life, and they in turn influence conduct. The individual may be a more or less uncritical and automatic habit mechanism, trained to act this way or that; but he has the possibility of being a consciously self-directing individual, a personality in his own right.

If we have this more adequate conception of personality, it will help in an understanding of the God personality. From one point of view, the universe seems to be completely mechanistic, stars in their courses, seasons in their rotation, nature in its evolution. All is mechanistic, subject to inexorable law. Personalities, themselves, seem to be caught in this fatalistic whole. But when one becomes better acquainted with the universe, he comes to realize that there are limitless possibilities yet untapped, and resources not yet released, and large elements seem as yet unpredictable. As we experience nature and human nature, there seem to be dominating the universe character-

istics, meanings, significances, which we call spiritual and personal. There is evidence of purpose and struggle; of beauty and growth. The universe in one sense is like human personality, a collection of inevitable happenings. From another point of view, it contains distinctive characteristics, definitely spiritual and personal. God represents both the manifest order and the creative possibilities of this universe. He represents its creative purposes. It is only as we take the psychophysical approach to human personality and the spiritual-physical approach to the universe, that we can have a conception of God true to our psychological science.

But, some may ask, is not a Universe Personality, even though we may recognize He exists, beyond the possibility of personal experience in any real and satisfying manner? If we will understand how another personality comes into being for an individual, it may help in understanding how a God in whom we believe intellectually often has not become a living reality in our experience; in other words, why the infinite majesty and power of the universe do not become personalized for us. For the little infant, everything around him is as much of a "blooming confusion" as the

universe seems to some adults. All he knows are a series of unrelated stimuli of various sorts to which he responds with some of the more available reflexes of his native equipment, but in no unified fashion as a self-conscious personality. Others do not exist for him in any organized manner, and he does not exist as a personality in any sense that we think of as personality. Little by little in his experience, as he tries out various possibilities of his repertory, and as he develops habits and attitudes which enable him to get along in this cold world, the other or "alter" stimuli to which he responds get organized in his experience into recognizable wholes, and he comes to distinguish these as compared to and in contrast to his ego or his self. Before this, persons distinguishable as persons do not have objective reality for him.

This ego-alter experience goes on as a unity. As his own personality comes to exist for himself, it comes to exist in contrast with and in relation to other personalities. In this experience, not only does his own personality grow, but other personalities come more and more into being for him. No one knows completely any other individual; no child knows his mother completely;

no friend, his friend; no man, his wife. Another individual exists for one in proportion as one has had experience with that individual. In that experience, an image, a picture, a conception of that individual is formed and reformed which is, for one's relation with him, the individual himself. We tend continually to make generalizations in our imaging of the other individual, even when our experience is limited, and treat that person on the basis of these generalizations: he is a grouch or generous, or hard to get along with, or love worthy. We think of other people not as they are but as we think we have found them to be, and we treat them as if they were the sort of personalities we think. So the extent to which the other individual exists for us and the degree to which this image is accurate are determined by the variety and extent and character of our experiences with him. Persons we have just met casually exist for us in very small degree. If we have shared play and work, joy and sorrow, and many aspects and experiences in life, this individual comes to exist for us in a reality that is commanding. And yet we never find him completely. Parenthetically, it may be remarked that one reason we never find him completely is that

he, himself, is changed by the very process through which we are trying to find him.

Much the same process goes on in one's religion. In an individual's spiritual immaturity, everything in the universe is a "blooming confusion." God as a personality does not really exist for him. The physical universe seems nothing but a collection of laws and forces, like the unrelated stimuli which come to the infant. Human folk exist, but they are varied, erratic, impotent. Out of the sum total of this confused experience with people, there has come no unified, organized personal unity. But for the person who really enters into experience with people, little by little certain great characteristics and potentialities in humanity come to exist, potentialities which are more than simply the sum total of folk and human experience, and yet are not apart from them. Love is recognized. Purpose is shared. Resources and reinforcements unfathomed and unaccounted for are discovered. They are mediated in social experience, sometimes in our immediate experience with parents, and brothers, and sisters or friends; sometimes in our experience with history; sometimes in our experience with great characters of the past, in our experience with the prophets

and Jesus. The living God is coming into being for us through our experience of Him.

Then as we really enter into experience with the physical universe something further happens to us. As we look up at the stars, as we enter into the beauties of the sunset, as we view the wonder of the mountains, as we get into touch with the infinite power of nature, little by little the universe takes on unity and personality *for us*. We share in its moral creativity. The Universe Personality comes to exist for us as we enter into experience with people and with nature and come to know for ourselves the great dominant characteristics of the universe, those things on which we can count. Thus, we come really to know God.

But this experience of the Universe Personality, God, is not inevitable. As a matter of fact, it is possible for other individuals to be, without their being in any real sense for us. We may be in the same house, we may go to the city on the same train, we may work in the same office, but we may have so completely failed to share experience with them that they do not exist effectively for us. Repeatedly we are discovering individuals whom we never knew before, who have been within the range of our experience. It is only as we really

share experience, *i. e.*, as there is mutuality in the relationship, that the other individual comes to exist.

Just as it is possible to have other people within the range of our experience and yet not have them come into being for us, so many people fail to experience this Universal Personality who is all around them. We may live in the universe and never get acquainted with it, and never have its qualities exist for us. We may live in the midst of beauty and never recognize it. We may live with persons and never find their great, universal qualities; but as we share experience with others and with nature, the great characteristics and potentialities of the universe may come to live for us; and we can think of them in no other way than as a personal God.

An interesting aspect of the development of human personality is the relation of one's self to his ideal self. This may have limited human characteristics. It may be embodied in one's friend or one's mother or a hero. It is in relation to this ideal self that the individual judges his own conduct and in turn attempts to attain his ideal, and thus he finds his own personality enriched. Great characters of history have sometimes represented

this; sometimes it is the ideal companion; for many, at present, it has become still more universal in the Christ of experience. For those whose ideal self becomes of universe proportions, it becomes God himself. God exists for him as the ideal universal self who has grown up in his experience with the universe and is for him the companion and reinforcement of his life.

One comes to the place where communion with God is possible in the same way as he comes to the place where communion with other personalities is a living fact. Communion involves experience shared to the place where one enters into conscious relationship with another without the medium of words. If two people have shared life sufficiently, each knows, in a new situation, what the experience is meaning to the other and each is conscious that the other knows. A person may have real communion at a concert or in an experience of sorrow or in some of the great enterprises of life. A person may have communion with another in an experience when the other person is absent. But no such experience as this is possible except as there has been a sufficient sharing of life as a background. So it is in regard to communion with God. This is the

progressive consummation of different phases of experience. Most people do not have communion with God because they have not shared the experiences of life sufficiently with Him to have any basis for such communion. In any situation they do not know God well enough to understand His purposes or to feel a relationship to Him. Consequently, they substitute various artificial devices for stimulating the emotions, thinking thereby they have mystical communion with God. If anyone has shared with God in the everyday affairs, communion with Him is a great and living mystical experience.

Thus God influences and helps us, in the same way that one personality influences and helps another. We are continually asking people to do things for us. But there is very little another person can do for us. There is very little that a mother can do for her child. She cannot even keep it alive unless it will cooperate even in its infantile way. A baby never will become a real personality if he lives on things done for him. It is only as he shares experience and responsibility with his mother that he grows and she can help him. And so it is with reference to the Universe Personality. There is very little that

the universe can do for human individuals directly. But anyone who puts himself in relationship with the universe, as found among human beings, as found in nature, as found in all the great enterprises of life, will discover resources available which represent nothing else than the infinite power of God.

The true follower of religion will not expect these powers to be available by the easy method of the direct intervention of God in answer to his request. He will count on them only as he truly prays and becomes a real coworker with God in searching to discover the conditions for their release, in seeking earnestly to put himself in touch with these infinite resources, and in working earnestly to bring about the results.

Perhaps it is because we have not recognized or dared to use the divine potentialities in ourselves and in others that we make so little progress. Some of us, like little children who look to their parents to do everything for them, have assumed that God wants us to be infants in relation to Himself. It is only as children are encouraged to take responsibility that they realize how little others can do for them and how much they can do for themselves; but in the process they come

to understand how much parents, teachers, and friends can really help them in helping themselves. Do we not all at first feel that we wish others to take responsibility and tell us what to do? Some wish others to give a direct answer to their problems. But perhaps they must come to realize that others cannot answer their questions satisfactorily, and if they could, it would be to their detriment. They must live into the answers themselves, and all that others can do is to cooperate with them. There are probably many who are making no progress on religious problems because they have not enough confidence in themselves and in others, and in the universe of which they are a part—in other words, not enough confidence in the immanent God—to take the first steps on any worthwhile problem or task. Perhaps they need to quit speculating on life and religion and really commence to assume an adult's responsibility.

Religion may easily become an escape from life rather than an aid to meeting it courageously. Some are asking religion to guarantee them a way out before they have even tried. It will not do this; but Jesus did say: "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you can say to this mountain, be ye removed and be ye cast into the sea, and

nothing is impossible to him that believeth." If someone will only help such persons to find some practical worthwhile endeavor, in which they really believe, but which seems beyond their power of attainment, and will lead them to undertake it whole-heartedly, they will find both themselves and God in the process; and their questions one by one will be answered if they have faith to take each new step. True confidence, which is faith, grows by practice. Strength comes through endeavor. God is found as individuals find themselves in the great cooperative enterprises for human progress —in comradeships in the great endeavors of life, in home, school, and community, in race relations, political affairs, and international endeavor. In one sense, confidence in one's self and in others is the deepest expression of confidence in God. At any rate, it is in our fellowship with others in such enterprises that our sense of God and our fellowship with Him grow.

It is seen then that psychology does not make a genuine religious faith impossible. Indeed the opposite seems to have been the record of the adoption of a scientific method in other areas of life. Each new scientific advance has been feared, and indeed opposed, on the ground that it de-

stroyed faith and denied God. This has been true of astronomy, medicine, evolution, and historical method in relation to the Bible. Each advance, it is true, has necessitated a rethinking of the meaning of religion, but the net result has been to rid religion of magical elements and to give the basis for a more intelligent faith. The science of psychology, dealing as it does with human personality, of course necessitates a rethinking of religion; but those who have come even to tentative conclusions on the meaning of a religious faith, which takes into account what we are coming to know of the laws of God in human personality and in social relationships, testify that, while their conception of God has been changed, it has been enriched; and they face life with a greater confidence because their religious faith has become a more intelligent factor in life.

One reason many are having difficulties with prayer, church worship, and other religious practices must now be evident. These are still, in so many cases, expressed in the pre-scientific terms of a universe in which a God, acting without reference to law, may be appealed to directly to respond to our requests. They do not represent an expression of our deepest beliefs, for all the rest of our

life—our studies at the university, our attitudes toward our health and our work, the basis of our achievement—assumes a scientific universe in which results are possible when conditions are discovered and met. As a result, religion is either given up as unnecessary, is confined to more restricted areas in life, or is used as an escape from life rather than as a resource. What is needed is a conception of God, a type and content of prayer, and an expression of worship which are true to one's scientific knowledge about human personality and about the physical universe and, therefore, true to one's most fundamental beliefs about God. Then the individual will find that not only do his religious practices have meaning but his religion represents the creative source of his life. When one has fellowship with a God who personalizes all one's deepest confidence in oneself, in others, and in the universe itself, his religious faith becomes the very center of life.

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